

# MERCURY.

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Vol. I.

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No. 2.

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The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or statement expressed in any article that appears in this Magazine.

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## Lucifer.

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In the evening, when the sun has bidden us all "GOOD-NIGHT," have you not often seen shining in the western sky a very bright star? I am sure you have seen it, and that many a time you have wished for wings to fly off into space, nearer, nearer to that glorious star called VENUS—Venus, the evening star. But sometimes we look into the West, towards the setting sun, and lo, there is no bright-shining Venus to be seen. Where has she gone? If you get up in the morning before the earth has opened its eyes to the sun, and if you look away to the East, you will see the very same star that once smiled upon you from the West. The evening-star is now the star of the morning, the herald of day. The wise men of old named it "Lucifer, the LIGHT-BEARER," because it tells the earth that the sun is near.

This wonderful star, at one time herald of the gladsome day, at another time the harbinger of the restful night, was to the people of old a beautiful angel. Great truths and good thoughts are angels, as you well know, and this star-angel was a picture-symbol of a great truth. It was the thought-picture of Knowledge, the messenger of the Sun of Wisdom; it was the angel of Love, which is faith, which is courage; the love which shines all the more brightly when the sun goes down and darkness creeps over the world. To the earth people of the long-ago, Lucifer-Venus, the star-angel, said all this and more; poets sang of it, and little boys and girls watched for it eagerly and dreamed of it lovingly; of Lucifer, the bearer of Light:

of Lucifer-Venus, the morning and evening star.

However, there came the night-time of Wisdom. All things, you know, have their day and night; the flowers and the stars have their waking and sleeping; nowhere is it always day.

Now, during the night-time of Wisdom, the light of knowledge faded away from the earth, until fathers, mothers and children lived in the darkness of ignorance; they did not know anything either about themselves or about the world. People who do not know anything really live in the dark and they grow afraid of the light. So the earth-people became afraid of knowledge, and called it evil. The star-angel, the Light-Bearer, was no longer loved. It was feared, then hated. At last the foolish men and women began to think of the star-angel as wicked and cruel; they changed the beautiful thought into an ugly bugbear. Little children scarcely dared go to sleep at night for fear that wicked Lucifer would carry them off. If anyone, a little wiser than the others, hinted that Lucifer-Venus was not evil, but the bearer of Light and Love, he was thought to be a very bad person, an enemy of all good children.

At first the star-angel felt sad at the change. Then it looked away, over to-morrow, and ever so many to-morrows, into the depths of time; and as it looked, it smiled, for it saw the day of Wisdom dawn again; it saw that children would once again love its brightness and watch for its shining; that the earth-people would understand its message; that once again the old and young would sing songs of joyous welcome to the star angel of morn and eve—to Lucifer-Venus, the Bearer of Light and Love.

## Our Mail Bag.

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A number of encouraging letters, with timely suggestions, some of which enclose contributions for the columns of "Mercury," have been received since the first issue. They have come from widely different quarters.

Overcome anger by love.

*Dhammapada.*

## Beginnings.

The friends of our well-beloved and wide-awake MERCURY will certainly be glad to take a peep at the very beginning of the "Children's Hour," now known as the "Lotus Circle." The idea took form in San Francisco in October, 1890. Some ideas, like some children, are born to struggle. Such was the fate of this idea. Enthusiasm and hope were its only riches. Even its friends were comparatively few, for the many disliked the idea of Sunday schools, while all exclaimed, "How can Theosophy be made plain and simple enough for children?"

There had been a big discussion about it at the "ad interim" convention held that year at Santa Cruz, and a committee was appointed to look into the matter. The three members of this committee lived too far from one another to do aught else than to encourage each other by letter.

The Rev. Mr. Copeland began a catechism admirable in simplicity and conciseness. I do not think it has yet seen the light of publication.

The ladies of the T. S. in San Francisco, who were in sympathy with children's work, met at the Headquarters, then a very small room at 13 Mason street. Some one uttered the magic word BEGIN. Agreed. But where? The idea was homeless for lack of money. Mrs. Dr. Moliere came to the rescue: "My house is at your disposal. Let the children meet there." I wish you could have seen our joy at this kind proposal. It was decided to meet at Mrs. Moliere's house on Sutter street, the very next Sunday afternoon. We determined to begin though we had neither books, music, money, nor plan—nothing but devotion and purpose. It was with quickening pulse and a queer heart-throb that we hastened to Mrs. Moliere's house on that memorable Sunday afternoon. We numbered five ladies, F. T. S., and we were assisted by two charming girls fully in sympathy with the work, though not T. S. members. We intended to have a discussion meeting among ourselves if there were no children, but the discussion was deferred; seven children came. Thus the movement began with a double seven.

The beginning was a success. The next Sunday the number doubled, and the third meeting filled the parlors

and two other rooms to overflowing. Money and books were given. Then the difficulties began. The ladies found it impossible to be on duty every Sunday. The plan of teaching was hazy. We did not know exactly what to do or how to work. The idea was to unite physical training with intellectual work and spiritual unfoldment. Unfortunately, a teacher of physical culture, devoted to the cause, did not appear and that part of the plan had to be given up. An effort was also made to lead the young minds to see the correspondences between the familiar processes of Nature and mental and spiritual laws. Here, our own lack of knowledge stood in the way. However, we kept on determinedly, though heart-sick many times. We made Universal Brotherhood and the great law of Karma—"We reap as we sow"—and the Unity of the Universe our basis of teaching. We found it all-sufficient.

Brother Oettl of Oakland adapted some Theosophic songs to beautiful music; others went to work to outline lessons, and gradually a literature began to form. A Mrs. Budd, of El Paso, Texas, published the "Rose-Garden." Other branches began to work, and at last our dear friend MERCURY comes to gather together all the scattered efforts, ideas and plans, and preserve them in a pretty, suitable form.

In November, 1890, the meetings for young people and children moved from Mrs. Moliere's to the present Headquarters. The next struggle was to get an organ; then a library. It is needless to say that the struggle succeeded. The Lotus Circle born of the "Children's Hour" is a success. One very, very interesting episode in its history was the Banner Presentation, but I must leave that account for another time.

—Marie A. Walsh.

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Why should we cling to this perishable body? In the eye of the wise, the only thing it is good for is to benefit one's fellow-creatures.

Katha Sarit Sagara.

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"Whoso performeth, diligent, content—  
The work allotted him, what e'er it be  
Lays hold of perfectness."

## The Two Little Workers.

"Oh, Mamma! Mamma! Where are you?" called Bessie West, as she came running up stairs and into her mother's room.

"Here I am, Bess," said mamma. "Why, what's the matter, dear? What troubles you?"

For the moment Mamma West caught sight of Bessie's face, she knew that something was wrong. Bess was not very excitable. Indeed, she was such a sensible little lassie, that papa playfully called her his little "stand-by," and said he was going to take her in as a partner when she got big. But just at present her little cheeks were flushed, and her eyes were very bright.

"Oh, mamma," she said, breathlessly, "Lil and I have found such a *drefful* poor little girl. Lil went home with her, and I came to tell you, and see if you couldn't come and help her. She told us her papa's been sick for a long time, and can't work at all, and her mamma has to take care of him, and—just *think* of it mamma—she never had nothin' to eat all day but 'ceptin' some bread! Lil had a pear in her pocket, and she gave it to her, and you just oughter see how quick she eat it all up. Oh, can't we do *somethin'*? I've got some money in my bank, and I think I oughter give it to them people, and may be Lil'll give hers, too. I think we oughter, don't you, mamma?"

"Bessie, dear, don't run on so fast. I can hardly keep up with you," said mamma, taking her little girl into her lap and smoothing her hair.

"Now, tell me quietly. You and Lillie have found a poor little girl that is hungry, have you?"

"Yes, and she was *drefful* hungry—*never had nothin' only bread to eat all day*. That's what I said."

"Well, and Lillie has gone home with her. But where does she live?"

"Just near here, on a little street. I forgot the name, but I 'member where it is. I can *show* you." And then jumping down, she took her mother by the hand, and said, "Come on, mamma. I know where it is."

"Just a minute, dear," said mamma. "You say the little girl's papa is sick."

"Yes, and he can't work at all, and neither can the

mamma, because she has to stay home and take care of him. That's all she told us, but Lillie said she was going right home with her and find out what was the matter, and I said I'd come and get you and take you there. But first of all, I want somethin' for the little girl—somethin' *good*, mamma."

"Very well, dear," said mamma. "We'll go down stairs and see what we can find. Here, you carry down my hat and cape, and I'll get the big basket and bring it down."

Bess ran on gladly, and before long that basket was filled with a store of good things from Mamma West's pantry. There was a loaf of cake, to begin with, for Mamma West knew from experience that little girls liked cake. And then she hunted up some potatoes and other fresh vegetables, and some butter, and rice and sugar and tea, and a jar of jelly for the sick man, and finally, when the basket was full, she put a bag full of fresh fruit into Bessie's arms for her to carry to the little girl. And while they are on their way to the little girl's home, I'll tell you more about Bess and Lil West.

I know you will all be interested when I tell you that they were both Lotus Circle girls, who had often heard about Reincarnation and Karma and Brotherhood.

Lil was twelve, tall and fair, with big blue eyes, and a sweet, quiet smile that made everyone love her. "Bonny Bess," as papa called her, was not quite seven, with dark eyes and brown curls that bobbed over her shoulders in the most persistent fashion. She was what we would call a *practical* little lady, full of life and energy. She and Lil were the best of friends, and went everywhere together. They were very fond of their Lotus Circle, and talked together about it a great deal. What interested Bess most was Brotherhood—the thought that everybody was her own brother and sister. Bess had never had a brother, and thought that was a great trial. In fact, she was quite jealous at one time of the little girls who had brothers. But, when she heard about the *Universal Brotherhood*, and found that *everybody* in the whole world was her brother, she was as happy as a bird! When she told her papa, he said she must try to *live up to it*, as well as *believe* it; that she must *practice* Brotherhood and not only talk about it. So Bess and Lil had put their heads to-

gether, and formed a "club" for the practice of Brotherhood, and they called it the "P. B. Society," which meant the "Practice Brotherhood Society."

Now, it wasn't a very big club. There were but two members, Lillie and Bessie; and they were both small, too. But papa and mamma were honorary members, and they helped Lil and Bess out by giving them some good advice once in a while. At the time of which I write, the P. B. Society was in a very flourishing condition, as you will soon see. The members were to practice Brotherhood in word, thought and deed. Papa declared that was enough; that they didn't need any more rules than just that; they were to speak kindly, think kindly and act kindly toward everyone. And Lil and Bess found, after awhile, that there were many, many people who *needed* somebody to be kind to them, and they got into a way of looking out for such folks, and giving them a kind word or thought whenever they could. And so it was that they happened to find the little girl of whom Bess was telling her mamma. She lived near them, and Bess had seen her often, and because she was a sad-looking little girl, Bess tried to get acquainted with her. Lil thought she had seen her somewhere before, and was attracted to her at once. She was only eight years old, they found, and real pretty, even in her shabby dress. She said her name was May Burns, and she showed Bess and Lillie where she lived, and after awhile she told them about her sick papa. Gradually, little by little, in her childish way, she told them about how poor they were. And the P. B. Society became interested at once, and, as you know, they immediately set about *doing something*. That was Papa West's great motto. He was always saying, "*Do something; don't talk, but act.*" And Bess and Lil both agreed that this was a time to *do*.

[To be Continued.]

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The Chest which has the sky for its circumference and the earth for its bottom, does not decay, for the quarters are its sides, and Heaven its lid above. That Chest is a Treasury, and all things are within it.

—*Chandogya Upanishad.*

# The Children's Corner.

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[This column will be devoted to questions and answers from children on Theosophical Subjects, which answers will be published with the initials of the sender.]

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN LAST ISSUE.

Q. 1 What is Reincarnation ?

A. Reincarnation means for the soul, the I am I, or the God within, to be born over into flesh. C. E.

Q. 2 What is it that reincarnates ?

A. It is the soul and not the body that reincarnates, for the soul never dies but the body does. E. D.

Q. 3 What would happen if everyone believed in Reincarnation ?

A. The world would be better, because we should have more charity for each other, knowing that we might have to go through the same experiences as those about us; and, too, knowing that we can come back and live again, and make up for wrong and mistakes, we should be more happy and hopeful.

Q. 4 If we have lived before why do we not remember this ?

A. We have a new brain every time we are incarnated, and our brains are not far enough evolved to respond to the vibration of memory. A. D.

Q. 5 What is the object of reincarnating ?

A. Every time we come back we become purer and wiser. Maybe every time we come back we come into different countries. R. L.

Q. 6. What is the length of time between each incarnation ?

A. There is no special length of time between each incarnation. A good person will have a long rest in Devachan, while a bad person incarnates immediately, because he has set up those causes which will bring him back soon.

A. D.

A. 1500 years is the ordinary length of time; but it may be very much shorter. A baby reincarnates quite soon af-

ter it dies; and if one desires very much to come back and work for humanity, the time will not be very long.

I. A.

The following questions have been received from children of the different Lotus Circles:

- Q. 7. Where does the thinker go after the body dies?
- Q. 8. What gives the perfume to flowers?
- Q. 9. How shall we practice Brotherhood?
- Q. 10. Why is it best to think good thoughts?
- Q. 11. What would happen if everybody believed in Karma and Reincarnation, and lived up to their belief?
- Q. 12. What is the Theosophical idea of instinct?
- Q. 13. Why do we have to come back and live our lives over again?

## Wise Sayings.

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I am the cause—I am the production and dissolution of the whole of nature.

—*Bhagavad Gita.*

As the ocean is the goal of all rivers, so Thou art the ultimate goal of different paths, straight or devious, which men follow according to their various tastes and inclinations.

—*Mahimnastava.*

God is not to be obtained by Vedic Sayings, or by remembrance of what is learned about him. He only whom He accepted can obtain Him; to his soul doth he reveal His nature.

—*Katho-Upanishad.*

Nothing is commenced or ended. Everything is transformed. Life and death are only modes of transformation which rule the vital molecular from plant up to Brahma himself.

—*Atharva Veda.*

Do not despise every person, nor apprehend all things impossible: for there is no man who hath not his moment, neither a thing that hath not its place.

—*Son of Azai in Hebrew Fathers.*

The Universe is the combination of a thousand elements, and yet the expression of a single spirit—a chaos to the sense, a cosmos to the reason.

—*Isis Unveiled.*

# A Series of Lessons on Karma,

FOR THE USE OF LOTUS CIRCLES.

[Continued from last Number.]

## POETICAL LESSONS AND RECITATIONS.

Buddha saw

How new life reaps what the old life did sow,  
 How where its march breaks off its march begins;  
 Holding the gain and answering for the loss;  
 And how in each life good begets more good,  
 Evil fresh evil; death but casting up  
 Debit or credit: whereupon th' account  
 In merits or demerits stamps itself  
 By sure arithmetic—where no tittle drops—  
 Certain and just, on some new-springing life;  
 Wherein are packed and scored past thoughts and deeds,  
 Strivings and triumphs, memories and marks  
 Of lives foregone.

*—Light of Asia.*

The books say well, my brothers. Each man's life  
 The outcome of his former living is;

The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes;  
 The bygone right breeds bliss.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields.

The sesamum was sesamum, the corn

Was corn. The silence and the darkness knew.  
 So is a man's fate born.

He cometh reaper of the things he sowed.

Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince  
 For gentle worthiness and merit won;

Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags  
 For things done and undone.

*Light of Asia.*

We can never be too careful

What the seed our hands shall sow:

Love from love is sure to ripen,

Hate from hate is sure to grow.

Seed of good or ill we scatter  
 Heedlessly along our way,  
 But a glad or grievous fruitage  
 Waits us at the harvest day.

*Anon.*

WAITING.

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,  
 Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea,  
 I rave no more 'gainst time nor fate,  
 For lo—my own shall come to me.  
 What matter if I stand alone?  
 I wait with joy the coming years;  
 My heart shall reap where it has sown,  
 And garner up its fruit of tears.  
 The stars come nightly to the sky,  
 The tidal wave unto the sea,  
 Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,  
 Can keep my own away from me.

KARMIC TEXTS.

That which ye sow, ye shall also reap.  
 He that plants thorns, will not gather roses.

*—Persian.*

A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship; and he who plants kindness gathers love.

*—Golden Grains.*

The net of Heaven has large meshes, yet it loses nothing.

*—Chinese.*

Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it will return to thee in many days.

*—Psalms.*

He that worketh mischief, it shall fall upon him, and he shall not know whence it cometh.

*—Ecclesiasticus.*

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

*—Christ.*

Deep in the man there lies his fate.

*—Emerson.*

Man is the maker of his own destiny.

The mills of the gods grind slow  
But they grind exceeding fine.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,  
Our life's star has had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar. —*Wordsworth.*

Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts.  
—*Puranas.*

The whole Past of the earth is an unfolded Present.  
—*Buchner.* (Axiom)

Wise are they who revere NEMESIS, (Karma)  
—*Greek.*

The soul of the pious shall meet his own good deeds in  
the form of a damsel, more beautiful and pure, who shall  
say unto him: "O youth, I am become this of thee; I am  
the good thoughts, the good words and good deeds that  
were thought, spoken, and done by thee." —*Persian.*

## Meetings and Classes.

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### SAN FRANCISCO.

The Children's Hour, or Lotus Circle, meets every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, at Rooms 35 and 36, 1504 Market street. All children are invited.

The H. P. B. Training Class meets every Friday at 8 p. m., at Rooms 35 and 36, 1504 Market street.

Free Public Lectures are given every Sunday at 7:45 p. m., at Red Men's Hall, 320 Post street.

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### OAKLAND.

Aurora Branch Training Class meets every Monday evening at Hamilton Hall, cor. 13th and Jefferson Sts.

Free Public Lectures on Theosophical subjects every Sunday at 8 p. m. at Hamilton Hall, cor. 13th and Jefferson Sts.

# The Sentinel.

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## NEW YORK.

The Aryan T. S., New York City, has a Lotus Circle with quite a large attendance. The Classes are held every Sunday afternoon, and continue to grow.

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## BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Brooklyn T. S. has a well attended Lotus Circle and also a Training Class for its young members.

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## IOWA.

Dana T. S., Sioux City, is conducting a Sunday School with two classes of children.

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## WASHINGTON, D. C.

Blavatsky T. S., Washington, D. C., we learn started a Lotus Circle but was unsuccessful. We hope before long to see another attempt with better results.

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## OAKLAND, CALIF.

We are informed that some of the members of Aurora Branch intend re-opening the Lotus Circle, which was temporarily given up last year. May their efforts prove successful.

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Recently a wonderful discovery has been made. A beam of sunlight is caused to pass through a prism so as to produce what is called a solar spectrum or rainbow. The disk is turned and the colored light of the rainbow is made to break through it. Now place the ear to the vessel containing the silk, wool or other material. As the colored lights of the spectrum fall upon it sounds will be given by different parts of the spectrum. For instance, if the vessel contains red worsted and the green light flashes upon it loud sounds will be given. Green silk gives sound best in red light. Every kind of material gives more or less sound in different colors, and utters no sound in others.

## Editorial.

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Now that our anticipations have been partly realized—for our expectations were modest—we are emboldened, not, of course, in the spirit of self praise, to make the statement that “we must succeed.” Not in a financial way; but we shall succeed, with your kind help, dear readers, in reminding you of your duty towards yourself and your brothers and sisters. We do not mean only brothers and sisters of one’s family, but all brothers and sisters.

“All undertakings succeed if conducted with prudence.” So that we have chosen “Prudence” as our Watchword in our new enterprise.

We, as children, have *our* desires as well as grown up people, and MERCURY hopes to implant in your minds the desire for improvement. MERCURY is published for your benefit and to conduce towards your happiness by instilling pure thoughts.

We have received, during the past month, much encouragement; but our invitation for contributions of articles upon Theosophical Subjects still remains open, and we hope always to be well supplied with enough literature so that there will be no apprehension on that score.

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In our next issue we shall open a new Department, which will be designated the “Puzzle Department,” and which we think will prove interesting and instructive. We are familiar with the words, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” so we must have all the fun we can in answering these puzzles. There is a time for everything, and so, whilst playing let us put our whole hearts into it, as well as when we are at work or our lessons. MERCURY would bring a message of joy and happiness to his dear young friends, as well as one of Wisdom and thoughtfulness.

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Let the wise man guard his thoughts, for they are . . . very artful, and rush wheresoever they list.

*Dhammapada.*

The wise man . . . regards with reverence all who deserve reverence, without distinction of person.

*Ta-chwang-yaw-Ring-lun.*

# Aurora Branch Training Class,

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

For a long time it was felt, among the members of Aurora Branch, that a Training Class, similar to the H. P. B. Class in San Francisco, was needed in Oakland; but it was not until after Countess Wachtmeister's visit that any action was taken in the matter.

On May 28th, 1894, a number of persons interested in Theosophy met at the residence of one of the members of the T. S. and organized the Aurora Branch Training Class, twenty persons signing the roll. The plan of organization is very similar to that of the H. P. B. Class. A simple Constitution and By-Laws were adopted. The President is elected to serve one month and the Secretary six months, the Secretary also acting as Treasurer. A Critic is appointed by the President at each meeting. No regular dues are exacted from the members, but any incidental expense, such as stationery, etc., is met by an assessment of five cents each.

Meetings are held every week, on Monday evenings; and it is the custom, at roll call, for each member to answer to his or her name by reciting a short verse from the "Voice of the Silence." The subject of the evening is then taken up and discussed by each one present, except the President, after which a short paper on the same subject is read by one of the members. The subject and program for each meeting is given out one week in advance, and is selected by a Committee of three, who hold office for one week and appoint their successors.

Much benefit has already been derived from the work of the Class; the attendance is good and interest does not decline. Thus is the Masters' work being advanced in Oakland by still another activity.

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A wise man never resents with passion the abuse of the foolish.

*Ta-chwang-yan-Ring-lun.*

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The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.

*Jesus of Nazareth.*

# Reviews.

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THEOSOPHIST. (June.)

"Old Diary Leaves" is exceedingly interesting in giving a description of life in the Lamasery. Such a personality as H. P. B. could not fail to attract attention. One can understand why Helena Petrovna did not care for being addressed as madam or other names; yet the liking for H. P. B. and the theory advanced for using it in preference to all others is in no way conclusive, and in the absence of any statement by that personality, the "curious" will not be satisfied.

"Footsteps" is a delightful story. Its perusal may enable its readers to trace their own Occult Brotherhood. The Koran is instructive. It would be a pleasure to have other Scriptures also taken up. June number is very good.

LUCIFER. (June.)

Notes from the "Watchtower" are interesting and instructive. Emerson is nearly always grand, but the first sentence in the quotation "I do not forgive in my friends," sounds rather peculiar coming from the mouth of the Plato of the Nineteenth century.

"Religious Systems of India"

is a clear, concise presentation of a vast subject, one of the best given. Notes on "Theosophy and the Theosophical Society" are excellent. If members and all concerned will remember the distinction, the Truth will prevail, and the annoyances will find their places nowhere. "Occult Indications in Ancient Astronomy" is a valuable contribution to that most interesting subject.

Eliphas Levi's "Letters" disclose intimate knowledge with Rome's place in the history of nations.

PATH. (July.)

"Agreements in all Religions" is the title of the lecture delivered by the Editor at the Religious Congress of the Midwinter Fair at San Francisco. It is Truth simply put, that he who runs may read, and leave his prejudices behind.

"Occultism" is a fascinating subject, but the mystic student is the only one that will benefit by its perusal.

It is gratifying to know that the Hindoos are waking to a sense of duty. The "Open Letter" has borne fruit. Let there be abundance of it, and Brotherhood will not be an empty name.